

PR 486: INTRO TO DIGITAL DESIGN TOOLS

ILLUSTRATOR BASICS

REMEMBER WHAT ILLUSTRATOR IS GOOD FOR!

- ▶ As the name suggests, it's good for drawing stuff. It's the preferred program for creating logos or illustrations, or taking something hand-drawn and digitizing it.
- ▶ Illustrator is a **vector-based** program, which means you can scale up your work to your heart's content.
- ▶ One-page layouts and small blocks of text work best in Illustrator.



DOCUMENT SETUP

PRESET DETAILS

Untitled-1

Width
8.5 Inches

Height
11

Orientation
 

Artboards
1

Bleed

Top
0

Bottom
0

Left
0

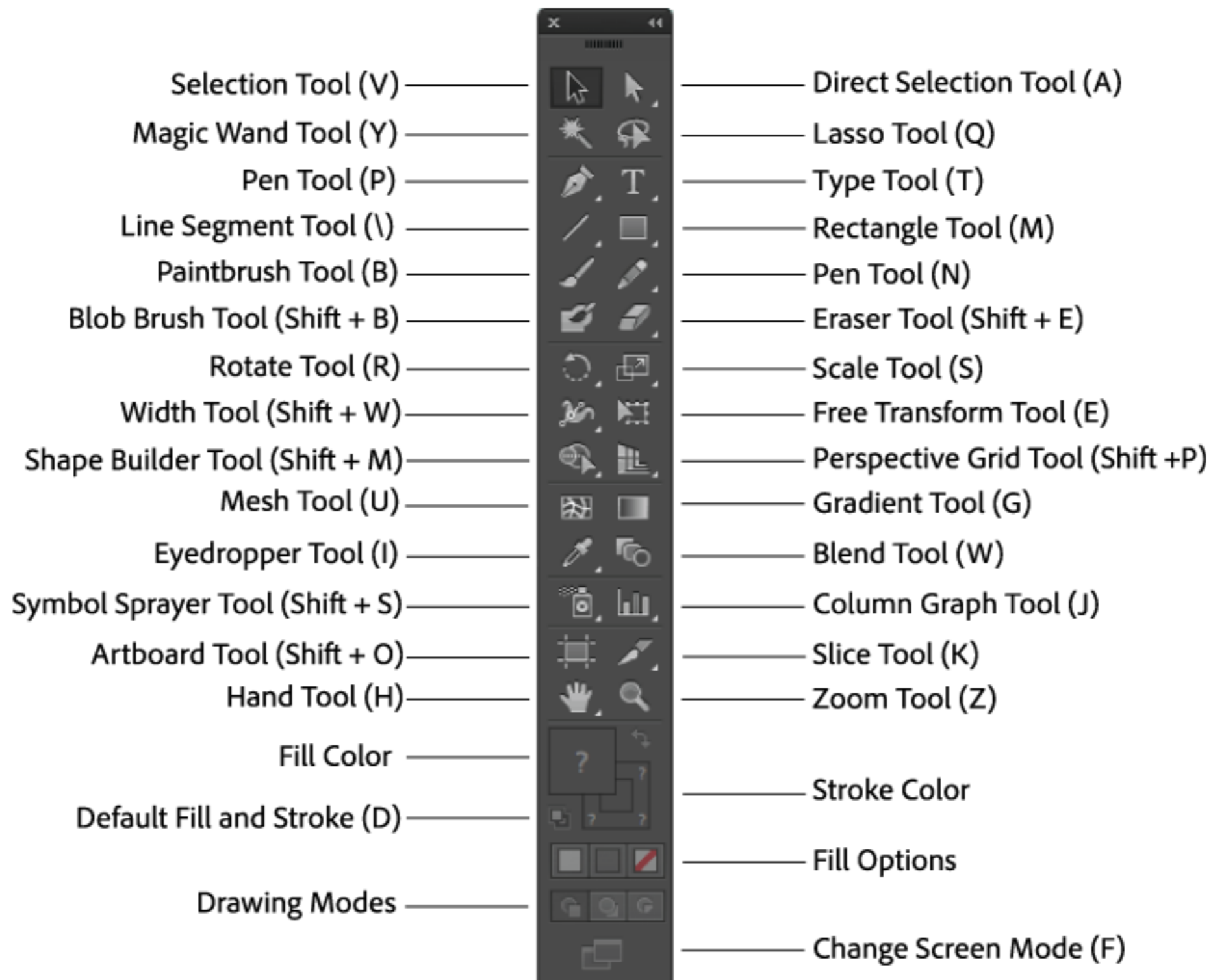
Right
0

Color Mode
CMYK Color

More Settings

- ▶ Setting up a document is similar to Photoshop. The main difference is that Illustrator usually defaults to print settings and CMYK color.
- ▶ Unlike Photoshop, you can set the bleed right in the document setup screen. Again, Illustrator is used primarily for print work, so that's why the bleed is much easier to find.
- ▶ If you're looking for resolution, click "More Settings." It's almost always set to 300 dpi by default.

ILLUSTRATOR TOOLS



COMMON SHORTCUTS

FUNCTION	MAC OS	WINDOWS
View Artwork at 100% Magnification	Command + 1	Ctrl + 1
Fit Artwork on Screen	Command + 0	Ctrl + 0
Temporarily Switch to Hand Tool while Drawing	Spacebar	Spacebar
Zoom In on Document	Command + (+)	Ctrl + (+)
Zoom Out on Document	Command + (-)	Ctrl + (-)
Lock selected Artwork	Command + 2	Ctrl + 2
Lock All Artwork	Command + Shift + Option + 2	Ctrl + Shift + Alt + 2
Unlock all Artwork	Command + Option + 2	Ctrl + Alt + 2
Duplicate an Object	Option + Drag	Alt + Drag
Change pointer to Crosshair when Selecting	Caps Lock	Caps Lock

QUICK TIPS

- ▶ You can customize your panels however you want to, but the most recommended one is “Typography.” It will give you access to the typography tools, color tools, and layers much more quickly.
- ▶ Just like in Photoshop, you can hit Command + R (Mac) or Control + R (PC) to make your rulers visible.
- ▶ If you don’t see the contextual bar at the top (it displays certain helpful items depending on what tool you’re in), go to Window and make sure “Control” is checked.

OTHER HELPFUL THINGS

- ▶ Layers aren't as important in Illustrator as they are in Photoshop. It's rare you'll make an adjustment using a layer; you'll usually just manipulate the shape itself.
- ▶ Learn the difference between the Selection Tool (filled arrow) and the Direct Selection Tool (white arrow). The filled arrow selects an entire object, while the white arrow is for selecting a specific handle or point in an object.

SHAPES IN ILLUSTRATOR

- ▶ Shapes are the building blocks of Illustrator. You can combine simple shapes to create more complex shapes, like flowers, clouds, even people. Learn to look at an object and think of all the different shapes that make up that object, and drawing becomes much easier in Illustrator.
- ▶ If you use the star or polygon shape tools, remember that you can change the number of points (for the star) or sides (for the polygon) your shape has. To do this, draw your shape but don't let go of the mouse or trackpad. While holding down the mouse or trackpad, use the up arrow key to add points/sides or the down arrow key to subtract points/sides. Once you're satisfied with your shape, let go of the mouse/trackpad.

SHAPES IN ILLUSTRATOR

- ▶ Group your shapes together if you want to move them as a whole. Use the Selection Tool (dark arrow) to select all the shapes you want together and hit Control/Command + G to group them. You'll also see that they're a group in your Layers panel.
- ▶ The Pathfinder tool is key when it comes to combining shapes. With it, you can cut parts out of a shape (for instance, creating a donut by cutting the middle of a circle out with a smaller circle). Creating complex shapes in this fashion is sometimes more powerful than simply creating groups because you can control color fills and strokes much more easily.

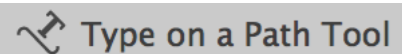
TEXT IN ILLUSTRATOR

Text is pretty straightforward in Illustrator. Using the text tool, click anywhere in your canvas to create a single line of text, or draw a box to create a space to write longer pieces of text.

You can manipulate the fill and stroke of text the same way you would a shape.

Illustrator has the standard text tool, plus the Vertical text tool and the Type on a Path tool.

TYPE ON A PATH!



This is usually hiding under the regular Type tool. If you create a freehand path using the Pen tool, you can apply text to this path using this tool. Simply make your path first, and then choose this tool. With the tool, click on your path and you'll see text on the path.

To edit where the text starts on your path, choose the direct selection tool and look for the blue line in your text. Drag one of the lines left or right to see how the placement of your text changes.



OUTLINING YOUR TEXT

When you work with text in Illustrator, keep in mind it is NOT a shape. It does not have a series of points and paths that you can manipulate the way other shapes in Illustrator do. If you want to manipulate parts of a letter – for example, extending the top of a sans-serif “h”, or stretching the end of a cursive letter – you’ll have to convert your text to an outline.

To do this, select your text block with the selection tool and then go to Type > Create Outlines.

OUTLINING YOUR TEXT

VERY IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT OUTLINED TEXT:

Once you outline your text, **you cannot edit it anymore using the text tool**. That means you need to proofread your text before you outline it or else any typos will be set in stone and you'll have to start with the type tool all over again.

Best practice is to save a version with outlined text (especially if you have to hand it off to a print shop) and another version that does NOT have outlined text.

OTHER HELPFUL TOOLS

▶  Scissors Tool (C)

(This is sometimes hiding under the Eraser tool.) Scissors allows you to add points to a path so you can cut a section of that path out. This is sometimes more useful than just using the pen tool to remove points because removing points can delete entire sides of shapes or have unintended effects.

▶ Effect > Warp

This is useful if you have text that you want to bend and warp into certain shapes, like arcs or waves. You don't have to have your text outlined to use this tool.

FLOURISHES

- ▶ You can open the Brushes panel to add illustrative touches to shapes. For instance, you can use a charcoal brush to give a box a stroke that looks hand-drawn, or use a pattern brush to give a shape a distinct border. There are tons of free brushes for use in Illustrator if you want to find them on Adobe Stock or on the internet.
- ▶ The Symbols panel has small symbols you can use if you want to spread them randomly over your project, or use a single symbol. These are essentially fancy shapes. One of the stock symbols is an inkblot, for instance, if you wanted quick ink spatter. To use a symbol, click the Symbol Sprayer tool (it looks like a spray can). Click once for one symbol, click and drag to randomly spray them around. If you spray symbols, they cannot be individually selected.

KNOW YOUR FORMATS!

- ▶ **AI:** The native Illustrator format. Preserves all layers. It's common to have one version that had all the fonts outlined and one version that doesn't so you can actually edit the type. This is also the file type that often gets linked and embedded in Photoshop documents or InDesign documents.
- ▶ **PDF:** Similar to Photoshop, saving to a PDF will usually keep your font problems to a minimum. You can often edit these PDFs directly in Illustrator too if you check the "preserve layers" option.

KNOW YOUR FORMATS!

- ▶ **EPS:** Sometimes people request EPS versions of a logo. Hit "Save As" and save it as an EPS. This isn't as common as it used to be, though.
- ▶ **JPG/PNG:** You can export your AI document into JPG or PNG if it's going to be used on a website. Keep in mind, though, that once you export it to one of these formats, you lose the ability to resize without losing quality. It becomes a raster file once you export it in these formats, so make sure it's the size you need it in.